TASK FORCE RUSSIA -- BIWEEKLY REPORT 1-14 MAY 1993 20TH REPORT

TASK FORCE RUSSIA (POW/MIA)

REPORT TO THE U.S. DELEGATION, U.S.-RUSSIAN JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIAs

21 MAY 1993

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0300

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

DAPE-ZB-TFR 21 May 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR

ACTING SECRETARY OF THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY DIRECTOR OF THE ARMY STAFF

SUBJECT: Twentieth Report, Task Force Russia (POW/MIA)

1. The 21 May report of Task Force Russia is being disseminated to OSD and the members of the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission, who include Members of Congress and Ambassador Malcolm Toon. This report consists of a summary of POW/MIA information obtained by the Task Force during the two week reporting period, 1 May 1993 -14 May 1993.

2. The report documents an unusually quiet reporting period characterized by continued attempts to shed light on the controversial "1205" document concerning Vietnam-era POWs, as well as continued public advertising in countries of the former Soviet Union.

3. Like all Task Force Russia reports, the document is unclassified, however, its distribution is limited to Commission members and others who have official roles in the POW/MIA community.

In Service to our Missing

/signed/

BERNARD LOEFFKE Major General, USA Director, Task Force Russia

HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

This report has been prepared for the use of the Commission in pursuit of our mission. While it is an unclassified document in accordance with Department of Defense classification guidelines for POW/MIA information, it nonetheless contains casualty-related information and should not be disseminated outside of Commission channels pending efforts by the Department of Defense Executive Agent to locate and notify as many of the next of kin as feasible.

BIWEEKLY REPORT ON SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

TASK FORCE RUSSIA (POW/MIA)

Period of Report: 1 May-14 May 1993

1. SUMMARY: The reporting period was uncharacteristically quiet from the operational standpoint, although TFR was involved in a great deal of administrative activity, ranging from preparations for

significant personnel turnovers in Washington to the possibility, raised by the Russians, of moving the Joint Office in Moscow from Ilyinka 12 to the Institute of Military History. Both the Washington and Moscow offices (TFR-W and TFR-M, respectively) engaged in further planning and preparations for a June trip to the Soviet Far East to investigate claims that U.S. WWII POWs, who reportedly died at the hands of the Japanese, are interred on the islands of Iturup or Sakhalin. Regarding the "1205" document on the subject of U.S. POWs held by the Vietnamese, TFR-W representatives met with representatives of the Department of State and other agencies to present TFR's in-progress analytical position. TFR continues to view the "1205" document as significant. TFR-M continued its aggressive interview and site visit program; however, due to a message backlog, some of these activities will be reported in the next issue of the Biweekly Report. In coordination with the Department of State, TFR also continued its campaign of newspaper advertisements in Russia and other states that emerged from the former Soviet Union, redoubling efforts in the Baltic states and expanding the campaign to Armenia.

2. UPDATE ON ISSUES FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS:

A. TFR-M continues to work with the Russian side of the Joint Commission to clear up misunderstandings about the impending trip to the Soviet Far East to search for the remains of U.S. WWII POWs, as well as to finalize travel arrangements. On 6 May, LTC Osipov, General Volkogonov's assistant, briefed TFR-M on the current Russian concept for the expedition. This would be a preliminary and exploratory site visit to determine whether a full-scale remains recovery operation is warranted. The Russians envision a joint team of 4-6 persons (4 Russians, 2 U.S. personnel) deploying in late May. TFR-M counter-proposed early June, which LTC Osipov found acceptable; however, Osipov noted that a still-later date would be impractical, since, should a full-scale expedition prove necessary, it would need to be deployed by early August, before the storm season impairs communications. The Russian side currently envisions the inclusion of Sakhalin on the itinerary as well as Iturup. TFR-M inquired as to the status of a reported advance investigative journey to the sites by a Russian officer. Osipov answered that this was a misunderstanding--although MG Kalinin of the Ministry of Internal Affairs travelled to the Far East, POW/MIA concerns were low on his list of priorities. Osipov stated firmly that the Russian side did not think a full CILHI-team deployment was advisable at this time, but promised that at least one Russian forensic expert would accompany the initial team on its deployment in order to insure site integrity. Osipov further noted that the Russian side has not yet been able to "refine" the initial information about the burial sites of U.S. POWs who reportedly died while in Japanese custody. He stated that, although inexact, the information regarding burial sites on Iturup remained more specific than the available information on burial sites on Sakhalin. Osipov said that local officials had been directed to ask long-term local residents for assistance, but that no results had been reported to Moscow as of yet. Osipov stated that the Russian side would make all of the arrangements for travel, housing, local transportation, labor (if required) and food, but the Russian side expects the U.S. side to fund the expedition. The TFR-M representative replied that the U.S. side was prepared to pay for legitimate operational expenses only. Further, TFR-M requested that the Russian side arrange for the U.S. participants to travel at the domestic "ruble" rate, in order to prevent any unnecessary expenditure of U.S. Government funds. Osipov replied that the U.S. members of the expedition would need to be in "accredited status" to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in order to travel at the ruble rate [Note: No member of TFR is "accredited" in the sense Osipov meant].

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 080959Z MAY 93

B. The Russian side informed TFR-M that no new information would be found in the Russian archives on the 2 September 1958 "Yerevan" shootdown. Speaking for the Russian side, LTC Osipov suggested that the U.S. side seek assistance from the Government of Armenia in gaining access to locally-held documents and residents who may possess relevant information. He noted that, while the Russian side could undertake this, the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan might well find the Armenians more response to a direct American approach. TFR-M advised the Russian side that the U.S. had already initiated a campaign of press announcements in Armenia. Osipov stated that copies of the file photographs from the investigative file on the Yerevan shootdown held in the Podol'sk archives will be made available to the U.S. side as soon as the "technical questions" of copying them are resolved.

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 080933Z MAY 93

C. TFR-M re-contacted Professor Yuri Petrovich Plotnikov, the head of the International Relations Institute, Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI), to ask for the temporary loan to the U.S. Government of one side panel from the F-111A crew capsule on display in one of MAI's laboratories. The purpose of borrowing the side panel would be to make a further attempt to positively identify the tail number associated with the crew capsule. Plotnikov pledged his personal cooperation with the U.S. efforts, but noted that final approval for such a loan would have to come from MAI's director, Professor Aleksandr Matveyenko. Plotnikov suggested that TFR-M submit an official request through him to Matveyenko.

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 141321Z MAY 93

D. TFR-M had a follow-up meeting with Colonel (Retired) Boris Aleksandrovich Voronov, a Russian Vietnam veteran, who had promised his cooperation. At the meeting, Voronov provided the Joint Commission with a copy of his unpublished manuscript about his Vietnam War experiences, a two-page autobiography, and a chronological list of U.S. combat aircraft downed in North Vietnam from August 1964 to the end of the war [TFR-M note: This list is based on the information available to Voronov during his period of service in Vietnam and is incomplete]. He further provided a list of downed aircraft organized by specific city and province, a copy of an East German book, published in 1969, on U.S. POWs in North Vietnam, and seven issues of a North Vietnamese newspaper showing pictures of captured American POWs. TFR-M provided a copy of each document to the Russian side of the Joint Commission and forwarded a complete set to TFR-W [TFR-W note: TFR-W recently received these documents and is currently analyzing them in conjunction with DIA. Further copies have been forwarded to relevant agencies].

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 141321Z MAY 93

E. TFR-M and representatives of the Russian side discussed ways of enhancing the jointness of the Commission's investigative activities. LTC Osipov again surfaced the possibility of relocating the joint office from Ilyinka 12 to facilities within the Institute of Military History (IMH) in order to reduce the difficulties associated with access to the more restricted complex at Ilyinka 12. TFR-M, noting that additional access credentials for Ilyinka 12 had just been received, stated that such a relocation could only be of interest to the U.S. side if it genuinely enhanced access to information or true jointness. Although considering access problems at Ilyinka 12 a nuisance, TFR-M does not consider that these difficulties mandate a relocation of the joint office. Osipov said he would continue to push for office space at IMH and that, once it is approved, the U.S. and Russian sides could decide jointly whether or not to relocate the joint office.

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 080933Z MAY 93

F. TFR-M advised the Russian side that the U.S. Government is pursuing a line of inquiry regarding POW/MIAs with the Federal Republic of Germany. This involves a request for any information held in the former East German archives relevant to U.S. POW/MIA matters, but with special attention to the 1967 proposal by attorney Wolfgang Vogel to swap U.S. Vietnam-era POWs for Soviet spies held by the British. TFR-M asked the Russian side to ascertain as to whether the East Germans shipped any relevant classified material to Moscow prior to German unification. LTC Osipov stated that he would make inquiries at the security services.

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 080933Z MAY 93

G. According to a reliable source, when General Volkogonov presented the "1205" document to the Russian declassification committee (consisting of representatives of the security services and relevant ministries), only the GRU (military intelligence) voted to release the document to the American side, with all other agencies and ministries opposing its release. Overall, this committee only approved the release of 1-2 documents out of a total of 28-29 requested by the U.S. side. A Russian decision on the TFR-M request to declassify and release the additional documents is pending.

3. EVENTS, INTERVIEWS, CONTACTS, AND MEETINGS ATTENDED:

A. From 24 to 27 May, the Director, TFR, in response to an invitation from Colonel-General Volkogonov, will speak to a series of military audiences in the Moscow area, including the student body and faculty of the General Staff Academy. While the work of TFR will not be the sole subject of the lectures, TFR views this as an excellent opportunity to put a human face on ongoing efforts to determine the fates of U.S. POWs who may have been taken to the former Soviet Union, as well as to broaden TFR's network of contacts within the military establishment of the Russian Federation.

4. LETTERS:

A. TFR-M delivered a letter from Senator Bob Smith to General Vologonov asking for his personal assistance in locating the Vietnamese-language original of the "1205" document, should such a document be in the Russian archival holdings, as well as any other documents relevant to the fate of unaccounted-for U.S. service members.

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 080824 MAY 93; SECSTATE WASHDC 292116Z APR 93

B. Amembassy Tallinn received one additional letter in response to the publicity attendant upon the recent visit by Ambassador Toon and the U.S. Delegation to the Joint Commission. Mr. Valdek Sirp wrote that, in May 1962, while serving in the Soviet Army in the Kalinini (Note: Kalininskaya?) District, he was near the site of a shootdown of a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft. Sirp claims the pilot survived by parachuting to the ground and was then taken to Moscow. Sirp drew a map of the site where the plane supposedly went down. Amembassy Tallinn has forwarded this map to TFR-M. Sirp asks that his name not be published in the open press and requests "some assistance" from the U.S. Government in return for the volunteered information.

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY TALLINN 121213Z MAY 93

C. Amembassy Vilnius received three additional letters:

(1) R. Lasmanaviciene wrote that two "USA landing-force soldiers" landed in Klaipeda about 1960. One reportedly was killed, the other arrested. Lasmanaviciene stated that the mother of the survivor, probably an ethnic German, lived in Klaipeda and received packages from America through Lasmanaviciene's aunt, who was also of German origin.

(2) P. Tsucinskas wrote that, prior to his release from the special camp system in January, 1956, he encountered many English-speakers. He said that all foreign prisoners wore the letters "INS," which stood for "Foreigners" (Russian: *Inostrantsy)*, on their knees, chests, across their backs and on their caps, making it easy to distinguish them from imprisoned Soviet citizens, who only had one or two letters followed by a number. He stated that, in 1954, many of these prisoners were brought to Temin-Tau and that they anticipated being exchanged in the Far East for Soviet citizens. They were taken away, along with Japanese prisoners, but, later, many of them were returned to the camps. Tsucinskas believes that the prisoner case files are probably held in the Karaganda KGB archives.

(3) Mr. Juodnirisis wrote that, while in the camp system, he encountered a Lithuanian named Ignas Stankevicius who had served in the U.S. Army but had been kidnapped by the Soviets while visiting a restaurant in East Berlin. The author and Stankevicius served together in Viatlag Post No. 6, Kirov Region, although Stankevicius was later taken to another camp post near the border of the Komi Autonomous Republic. Although unspecified, the author apparently feels that Stankevicius has a claim on U.S. citizenship.

MSG CITE: AMEMBASSY VILNIUS 071447Z MAY 93

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. Continue our efforts to obtain any and all documents from Russian archives that could shed further light on the authenticity/accuracy of the "1205" document concerning U.S. Vietnam-era POW/MIAs.

B. Continue to finalize plans for deployment to the Baltic States of a TFR-W interview team(s) to follow up on the many leads generated by the April visit of the U.S. delegation to the Joint Commission.

C. Statements by Russian participants in the Joint Commission as well as other TFR contacts indicate that information collected by Chinese researchers could shed light on Russian involvement in the Korean War. TFR, in coordination with the appropriate agencies, should aggressively pursue "China leads"--especially from former PLA members and military researchers.